

VICTOR EMMANUEL, EMANCIPATOR

NO. 986

A SERMON
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison,
and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.”*
Isaiah 42:7.

ON a former occasion [Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Volume 16, No. 915, “sinners Bound with the Cords of Sin”] we contemplated the unconverted man as being bound by the cords of his sins. It was a very solemn and sorrowful topic. I trust it humbled us all, and made those of us whom the Son has made free feel renewed gratitude for the glorious liberty of the children of God. Sad was the spectacle of the dungeon and the fetters, and the felon bound there, a man, a brother, the image of us. It is a great relief to turn to another subject akin to that, but full of cheerfulness and joy. We showed you the prisoner: we have now to speak of Him who came to set the prisoners free! We described the captive’s cords and bonds; we have now to tell you of Him whose mighty touch liberates the bondslaves, and signs the Magna Charta of eternal emancipation! The case of manhood bound like Prometheus to the rock, and preyed upon by the vulture of hell appeared utterly hopeless, and the more so because the prisoner was his own fetter, and disdained to be free. After all that has been done for man by the tenderness of God, the simplicity of the gospel, and the clear and plain command; yes, and after all the thunders of threats, followed by the wooing notes of God’s mercy, the captive continues still the willing slave of sin, and his liberation appears utterly hopeless. But things impossible with men are possible with God, and where human agency fails, divine agency delights to illustrate its own extraordinary energy. We gladly survey at this time the effectual operations of Jesus the Savior, the true Victor Emmanuel, who comes to set men free from the bondage of their sins, to whose name be honor and glory world without end!

I. Looking at the first verses of this chapter, we shall consider WHO IT IS THAT SENDS JESUS CHRIST TO ACCOMPLISH THE LIBERATION OF THE SONS OF MEN, because much will depend upon the liberator’s credentials, the authority by which he is warranted, and the power by which he is backed.

We sing for joy of heart as we see that the Infinite God Himself commissioned the Lord Jesus to be the deliverer of men; and He did this, first, *in His capacity as Creator*. Read the fifth verse, and behold the great author of the Redeemer’s commission—“Thus says Jehovah, He who created the heavens, and stretched them out; He who spread forth the earth, and that which comes out of it.” He, then, who spared not His own Son, but sent Him forth on the mission of love, is Jehovah—who has made the heavens a pavilion of azure, gilded with the sun, and bedecked with stars. The same all-sustaining One who bears up the pillars of the universe, and impels the earth in its majestic circuit; He who gave its luster to every precious stone from the mine, its life to every blade of grass, its fruit to every tree, its motion to every beast and winged fowl, for all these may be said to come out of the earth; He it is who sent the Incarnate God to open the two-leaved gates, and cut the bars of iron asunder that the slaves of Satan might escape from the thralldom of their sins! Jesus, the Son of God, comes armed with the power of the Creator Himself! Rejoice, then, you who are lost, for surely the power which spoke all things out of nothing can create you new, though there is nothing of good within you to aid the God-like work! Rejoice you who are marred and broken like spoiled vessels upon the potter’s wheel; your great Creator puts His hand a second time to the work, and resolves to form you for Him that you may show forth His praise! He by whom you were made in secret, and who curiously worked you in the lowest parts of the earth, is able by His mysterious working to create in you a *new* heart, and infuse into you a *right* spirit! Is there not hope for the dark chaos of your fallen nature, and that heart of yours which is now without form and void? Is anything too hard for the Lord? Is there any restraint of His power? It is true your fellow

creatures, be they exalted ever so highly by office or character, cannot regenerate you; the very idea is blasphemy against the prerogative of Him who alone can create or destroy; but where the will of man, and blood, and birth all fail, the Spirit of the Lord achieves the victory! Thus says the Lord, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind; but be you glad and rejoice forever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem rejoicing, and her people a joy." What has John written in the book of his vision? Is it not to the same purpose? He that sat upon the throne says, "Behold, I make all things new." He who made the light can open your eyes! He who bade the rivers flow can open springs of penitence within your souls! He who clothed the earth with verdure can make your barren minds fruitful to His praise! If He piled yonder Alpine summits, balanced the clouds which float about them, and formed the valleys which laugh at their feet—He can yet create within the little world of man, thoughts that aspire to heaven, desires that ascend to the realms of purity, and good works which are the fair products of His Spirit! Has the Creator sent forth a liberator to captive men? Then there is hope, indeed!

He who sent forth the Lord Jesus as His Elect One to restore our fallen race also describes Himself as *the life giver*. For returning to the fifth verse of the chapter before us, we read, "He who gives breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them who walk therein"! The Lord creates animal life—He puts breath into the nostrils of men and beasts; He also gives mental life—the life which thinks, imagines, doubts, fears, understands, desires; all life comes from the central fountain of self-existence in the great I AM, in whom we live, and move, and have our being. This Eternal One, who has life in Himself, has sent forth His Son to give life to those who are dead in trespasses and sins, and He has girded Him with His own power, "For as the Father has life in Himself; so has He given to the Son to have life in Himself." It is by the word of Jesus that the dead shall rise, "For the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth." Arrayed in such life-giving power, no case of human corruption can be beyond the Redeemer's skill. Even those who rot, like Lazarus, shall come forth when He calls them, and the bonds of death and hell shall be loosed! Thus says the Lord of life—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He who hears My word, and believes on Him who sent Me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." The vision of Ezekiel's valley has become a fact since Jesus has appeared, and it is no marvel that it should be so, since the Eternal and Ever-living God has sent Him. He can breathe the Holy Spirit into the dead soul, and give the heart that palpitates with penitence, and leaps with desires after God; He can give eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame; all that belongs to life He can bestow—the hearing ear, the speaking tongue, the grasping hand. The great obstacle in His way is spiritual death, and as with a word He can remove it! The salvation of man is no longer a difficulty: rejoice, you heavens! And be glad, O earth! For among the graves of our sins, and into the very morgue of our corruption, the Quickener has descended, and is quickening whomever He will!

Nor is this all—He who sent the Redeemer is represented, in the sixth verse, as *the faithful God*. "I the Lord have called you in righteousness." That is to say, the God who sends Christ the Savior is not one who plays with words, and having given a promise today, retracts it tomorrow. "He is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent." Immutable are His promises and purposes, for they are founded in righteousness. He who has commissioned His chosen messenger is not unrighteous to forget His word; has He said, and shall He not do it? Has He spoken, and shall it not come to pass? Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, every gospel promise has the stamp of the divine righteousness upon it that you may know it to be true; Jesus assures us that if we believe in Him we shall be delivered. God, who cannot lie, sets His seal to the promise. "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved," is not only the declaration of Christ, but God Himself confirms it! Then, "Amen, so let it be!" The vilest sinner who believes shall find life, pardon, acceptance, and blessedness in Christ Jesus. You have not to deal, O trembler, with one who will interpret his promise at a lower point than you understand; you have to deal with One who means more than words can express, whose thoughts are as high above your thoughts, even when enlightened by His Word, as the heavens are above the earth. "Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool." He who utters these words is

the Lord, the faithful promiser who has sent forth Christ—not to deceive you with specious promises, but in very deed and truth to bring abundance of grace to those who trust Him!

Reading further in the same verse you will perceive that the ever-blessed sender of the Lord Jesus is *omnipotent*, for is it not added, “And will hold Your hand, and will keep You”? By which is meant that God will give to the Mediator all His power. Christ is the power of God. Omnipotence dwells in Him who once was slain, but now lives forever, and He is able to save unto the uttermost them who come unto God by Him. In the gospel of Christ there is a putting forth of divine power as manifest as in the creation and in the upholding of the world. Here is our comfort under all the assaults with which the Christian faith is threatened, and under all the disappointments which the Christian church has up to now undergone! Emmanuel, God with us, is still our strength; we are persuaded that the ultimate victory of the cross is absolutely certain, for “the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.” The creation was a work of omnipotence, and yet it was not accomplished all at once. The Lord could, if He had so willed it, have fashioned this habitable globe in one second of time, and have furnished all its chambers by a single word of His mouth. Instead of this, we have reason to believe that He lingered in the first formation of it, in the beginning when He created the heavens and the earth. He arranged and disarranged it many times before He came to the final constitution of it in the first six days of time, wherein He modeled it to be a fit abode for man. Even then, when He came to the final work, not in one day did He build up chaos into the beautiful house of humanity; not at first did the firmament divide the waters, or the dry land appear above the seas. Not till the third day did the earth bring forth grass and the herb yielding seed; nor did sun and moon divide the empire of day and night till the fourth day had dawned. The fowl that fly in the open firmament of heaven, and the living creatures that move in the waters owned a yet later birth. Everything was gradual. Step by step the Maker advanced—yet there was never anything less than omnipotence in every step of His progress!

So, my brothers and sisters, the Lord might as easily have converted the whole world to Christ on the day of Pentecost as not, but His decrees had not so appointed. A step was taken in apostolic times, and the light shone forth in darkness; further on the great division between the heavenly and the earthly became marked and clear, and the church rose like the dry land above the seas of sin, while the plants of the Lord’s right-hand planting brought forth their seed and their fruit. Even now the appointed lights make glad the sky, and the time hastens on when the Lord shall more evidently bless His living ones and say, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth.” But all is done by degrees as He appoints. Our impatience would gladly stand at the eternal elbow, and say, “Master, complete Your work, and let our eyes behold the second Adam in a world restored into a second Eden.” But He tarries for a while, and waits while His great appointed evenings and mornings fill up His week of glorious work! He delights in this noble labor of His hands, and is not as the hireling who earnestly desires the shadow that his toilsome task may be ended. He lingers lovingly, and His long-suffering is salvation. The Lord’s decrees tarry not so long but what, in the divine reckoning, and according to the Lord’s own estimate, the end will come quickly; but to the presumptuous who dare to say, “Where is the promise of His coming?” He seems to linger long. How blessed will be the grand finale of redemption work; then shall the morning stars sing together, and all the sons of God shout for joy! The seventh day of redemption shall eclipse the Sunday of nature, even as the new heavens and the new earth shall outshine the former—a river purer than Hiddekel shall water the new Eden! The tree of life of richer fruit shall grow in the midst of the garden, and then shall be fulfilled the saying which is written, “Sing, O you heavens, for the Lord has done it: shout, you lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, you mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord has redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel.” As we read the promise, “I will hold Your hand, and will keep You,” we see the certainty that the Savior girt with the all-sufficiency of divine strength will accomplish the work of human salvation. Be of good cheer, O children of God, and comfort yourselves with the belief “that He shall see His seed; He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.” His church has no reason for fear, but every ground of confidence as to her future. Rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of you—

*“Fear not, though many a mighty foe
Against your walls advance!
Jehovah’s arm will lay them low
For your deliverance!
Oh, take Him at His royal word
That word which cannot lie.
Your shield and sword is Israel’s Lord,
Almighty sovereignty.”*

I know you will tell me, “Most men say that the world will end in a few years; is it not written that the Bridegroom comes quickly?” Yes, but remember that 1800 years ago it was also written that He would come quickly! And there have been prophets in all ages who have concluded from this that the end was near, while many believers have been like the Thessalonians, to whom Paul wrote—“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that you be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.” We have been instructed by certain pretended expositors to expect the time of the end for the last seven years, and yet it is possible that it may not arrive for the next 70,000 years! perhaps human history, as yet written, is but the first stanza of a wondrous poem which shall be unfolded, page by page, for many an age to come; and it may be possible far more rapturous strains of divine mercy and grace in the conversion of men are yet to be read by angels and glorified spirits. If it is so, it will still be true that He comes quickly, for what will time be compared with *eternity*? Even if the space taken up by the world’s history is not a brief 6,000 years, but 60,000 times 6,000 years, yet will it be but as a drop in a bucket compared with the years of the right hand of the Most High—the lifetime of the Ancient of Days! Fight on hopefully, my brothers and sisters, and be not distressed with rumors of times and seasons, but believe this—that God is, in Christ Jesus, reconciling the world unto Himself, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. Watch daily for the Lord’s coming, but yet struggle to advance His kingdom, for “He shall have dominion, also, from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.” The Lord has not withdrawn His hand from His “Elect, in whom His soul delights.” He will subdue nations before Him; He will loosen the loins of kings to open before Him the two-leaved gates. With such a deliverer so gloriously upheld, there is no room for fear of failure! Our hope and faith joyfully rest in Him to whom the eternal gives His almightiness to subdue all things unto Himself.

II. We will now advance a little further, the Lord helping us; having contemplated the glorious One who sent Jesus to the work of man’s emancipation, let us, in the second place, consider the SENT ONE HIMSELF.

We have Him described in the first verse of this chapter, and the first words which we will select from the description inform us that Jesus is *the chosen one*. “My elect, in whom My soul delights.” God has been pleased to set apart His well-beloved Son to be the Savior of sinners, and in every way He is most suitable; as man He is supremely adapted for the work; no other born of woman was fitted for the enterprise. Born in a peculiar manner, without taint or blemish, He, alone, of human kind possessed the Holy nature necessary to make Him God’s messenger of love. I tried to show just now that God has girded our Lord with His omnipotence, and this ought to lead every sinner to feel that Christ can save him—for what cannot Omnipotence do? We may not talk of impossibilities or even difficulties when we have almightiness before us! No sinner can be difficult to save; no bonds hard to remove when God, the Almighty One, comes forth to save! Now look at the other side of the picture and remember that Christ Jesus was the most suitable person in whom the Father could place the fullness of His saving power. In His complex person He is every way adapted to stand as Mediator between God and man; He who laid help upon one who is mighty, and exalted one chosen out of the people, was guided by infallible wisdom in His choice. None other was as fit as Jesus Christ! In fact there was no other. “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid.” Other door of hope can no man open than that which God has opened in the person of Christ! O sinner, I beseech you accept what God has wisely chosen! Let God’s choice be your willing choice! At this hour, compelled by the grace of God, say, “If God has chosen the Lord Jesus to

be a propitiation for sin; my heart accepts Him as the atonement for my sin, feeling that He alone can save me.” If thus you do elect the Lord’s elect One, you shall find Him precious!

But we are also told in the first verse that the Lord Jesus is *anointed to this work*, as well as a choice one for it. “I have put My Spirit upon Him.” Now, the Holy Spirit is the greatest of all actors in the world of mind. He it is who can illuminate, persuade, and control the spirits of men; He does as He wills with mind, even as in the first creation the Lord worked as He willed with matter. Now, if Jesus Christ has the fullness of the Holy Spirit resting upon Him, it is not supposable that any sinner shall be so desperately enslaved that He cannot set him free! We are about to speak of blind eyes to be opened—but in the light of the Holy Spirit, what eyes need remain blind? We shall speak of captives to be liberated—but with God’s free Spirit to loose him, what soul need be bound? Bold men have taught doctrines which have emancipated the minds of their fellows from the slavery of superstition, but the Holy Spirit’s teachings deliver minds from bondage of *every* kind, and make men free before the living God! Trembling sinner, accept Christ as your Savior! God appoints Him! God anoints Him! Are not these two reasons sufficient to make Him acceptable to your soul?

Furthermore, the Redeemer is spoken of as being *gentle and lowly of heart*, which should commend Him much to every lowly and contrite spirit. “A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench.” We need a Savior who can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, and Jesus is such! Souls conscious of sin are very tender and agitated with many fears; to cure a wounded conscience is no fool’s work, but fit labor for the most experienced physician. See, then, how fitted Christ is; He never yet said an unkind word to a soul that desired to find mercy at His hands; in the records of His life you may find Him try, but you shall never see Him repel an anxious spirit. Feeble faith could only touch the hem of His garment, yet virtue flowed from Him! When the leper said, “Lord, if You will, You can make me clean,” it was but poor faith—but that faith saved him! Though you cannot yet believe as you would, yet say, “Lord, I believe; help You my unbelief,” and He will not reject you! Look at the smoking candlewick which yields no light, but makes much offensive smoke—yet, perhaps, a living fire lingers in it, and therefore the tender Savior will not quench it, but will even fan it to a flame. And that bruised reed—how it mars the music of the pipes! Draw it out and break it! So would men do, but not so the sinner’s Friend; He makes it perfect yet again, and pours the music of His love through it. O you who are in your own esteem utterly worthless—only fit to be thrown away, unfit to live, and unfit to die—Jesus Christ, the gentle One, will give you mercy if you seek Him! And in giving He will not upbraid you! O wandering child, Jesus will introduce you to His Father who will kiss you with the kisses of His love! He will take off your rags of sin, and clothe you with glorious robes of righteousness! Only come to Him, for He is such an one that He cannot reject you! “How can I come?” one asks. A prayer will bring you; an anxious desire will be as a chariot to you; a trust in Him has brought you, and Christ is yours if you do now accept Him; if your soul is truly willing to have Christ, *Christ has made you willing*, and has already begun to set you free! May these thoughts concerning the great Emancipator cheer you on to confidence in Him.

One more point in this direction. The Christ who has come to save the sons of men is *persevering to the last degree*. “He shall not fail, nor be discouraged till He has set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for His law.” Men are unwilling to be saved; they do not desire to be brought out of their prisons; but Jesus Christ will not cease to teach, nor cease to seek, nor cease to save till every one of His elect is redeemed from the ruin of the fall, and until a multitude beyond all count shall surround the Father’s throne. I tell you, soul, if Christ wills to save you, He will save you; He will track your footsteps, wander where you may! If you should escape, time after time, from the arrows of conviction, and plunge again and again into sin, yet He will seek you out and find you! O delay not, but yield to His power! I pray that He may stretch out His sovereign arm at this moment, and rescue you from yourself! If your heart were as adamant, or as the nether millstone, He can dissolve it with a touch! O that the rock-breaking hammer would come down upon you now! He is mighty to save! May He prove His mightiness in you!

III. It is time that we expound the text, and review THE WORK ITSELF.

According to the text, the Messiah's work of grace is divided into three parts, of which the first is, *to open the blind eyes*. Here is a notable work which brings much glory to our Lord. Man's understanding is perverted from the knowledge of God, from a true sense of sin, from a realization of divine justice, from a right estimate of salvation. The understanding, which is the eye of the soul, is darkened, but when the anointed Savior comes, He removes the scales of our mental eyes, and in the light of God we see light; then the sinner is humbled and bowed down, for he perceives his guilt and the justice of God. Moreover, he is filled with alarm, for he sees the bleeding Savior bearing Jehovah's wrath, and rightly judges that in every case sin must receive a recompense of His wrath, for if sin laid on Christ was punished, how much more must *personal* sin involve banishment from the presence of the Most High? The sinner is then made to see that the only way in which sin can be removed is through the expiatory sufferings of a substitute. He is led to see that the atonement avails for him upon his believing; he is led to understand what believing is; he believes, he trusts, and then in trusting he is made to see the completeness of pardon, and the glory of the justification which comes to us by faith in Jesus Christ. You may think that this is an easy thing for men to see; trained in the doctrine of it from their childhood, and hearing it incessantly from the pulpit, it would seem so, but, believe me, simple as it seems to be, no man receives it unless it has been *given* him from heaven! We may say to each one who has seen all this, "Blessed are you, for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you." Many of us heard the gospel from our childhood, but until the Holy Spirit explained to us what it was to be a sinner, and what it was to believe in Jesus, we did not know even the rudiments of the gospel; we were in darkness ourselves, though the light of God shone round about us, and well might we be, for our eyes were not opened! When Jesus came we saw it all, and we understood the mystery! Our once blind eyes clearly saw ourselves lost—and Christ suffering instead of us, we believed in Him. Our sins disappeared, and we were accepted in the Beloved. My dear friend, if you are seeking rest, I pray the Lord to open your eyes to see the simplicities of the gospel! One touch of His finger will make you wise unto salvation. There is no need for you to study the twenty-one folio volumes of Albertus Magnus, or even the fifty-two volumes of John Calvin, for the whole secret of the gospel lies in these few words—"Believe and live." Yet you cannot open the case unless the Lord gives you the secret key; it needs an opened eye to see even through a glass window. The clear witness of the gospel is dark to blind eyes.

The next work of the Messiah, according to the text, is *to bring out the prisoners from the prison*. This, I think, relates to the bondage under which a man lies in his sins; habits of sin, like iron nets, surround the sinner, and he cannot escape their meshes. The man sins and imagines that he cannot help sinning; how often do the ungodly tell us that they cannot renounce the world, cannot break off their sins by righteousness, and cannot believe in Jesus? Let all men know that the Savior has come on purpose to remove every bond of sin from the captive, and to set him free from every chain of evil. I have known men strive against the habit of blasphemy; others against unchaste passions, and many more against a haughty spirit, or an angry temper; and when they have strived manfully but unsuccessfully in their *own* strength, they have been filled with bitter disappointment that they should have been so betrayed by themselves. When a man believes in Jesus his resolve to become a free man is to a great extent accomplished at once; some sins die the moment we believe in Jesus, and trouble us no more; others hang on to us, and die by slow degrees—but they are overcome so as never again to get the mastery over us! O struggle after mental, moral, spiritual liberty if you would be free; but remember your only possible freedom is in Christ! If you would shake off evil habits or any other mental bondage, I shall prescribe no remedy to you but this—to commit yourself to Christ the Liberator—

*"The gates of brass before Him burst,
The iron fetters yield."*

Love Him, and you shall hate sin! Trust Him, and you shall no more trust yourself! Submit yourself to the sway of the incarnate God, and He will break the dragon's head within you, and hurl Satan beneath your feet. Nothing else can do it. Christ must have the glory of your conquest of self; He can set you free from sin's iron yoke; He never failed yet, and He never shall. I earnestly entreat any man who desires to break off his sins (and we must break them off or perish by them), to try this divine remedy, and see if it does not give him holy liberty. Ask the thousands who have already believed in Jesus, and their

testimony will confirm my doctrine. Faith in the Lord Jesus is the end of bondage and the dawn of freedom!

The last part of this divine work is *bringing them who sit in darkness out of the prison*. This we will refer to those who are truly emancipated, and yet by reason of despondency sit down in the dark dungeon. We have in our pastoral duties constantly to console persons who are free from their sins, having, by divine grace, gotten the mastery over them, yet they are in sadness. The door is open, the bars are broken, but with strange obstinacy of despondency they remain in the cell of fear in which there is no necessity for them to continue for a moment! They cannot believe that these good things are true to them. Are they forgiven? They could believe everybody else to be pardoned but themselves! *They* made the children of God? No, they could hope for their sisters; they have joy in knowing that their father is a child of God, but as to themselves—can such blessings really fall to the lot of such unworthy ones? We have talked with hundreds of such, and tried to console them, but we have only learned our own lack of skill in the art of consolation! They are rich in inventions for self-torture, ingenious in escaping comfort; but, ah, the blessed Master of our souls, whose business it has been since Adam fell to bind up broken hearts, is never foiled! When His eternal Spirit comes to anoint with the oil of joy, He soon gives beauty for ashes; the mournful sentinel of the night-watches must rejoice when the day breaks, and the Sun of righteousness shines forth!

Although I speak to you in very common language, yet the theme is rich. This one thought, alone, ought to make our hearts dance for joy—to think that the Christ of God undertakes to lift up desponding and despairing spirits into hope and joy once more! I know who will rejoice to hear this! It is yonder good woman who these many years has been in spiritual bondage; it is yonder young man who has carried a secret burden month after month; it is yonder aged man who longs to find Christ before he gathers up his feet in his dying bed, and who thinks that his hour of grace has passed. Man, it is not so! Christ is still mighty to save! Still does the message run—“He who believes on Him is not condemned.” “Whoever will let him take the water of life freely.” “Ho, everyone who thirsts, come you to the waters and he that has no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” Prisoners of hope, your liberator is near at hand; trust Him and be free! Though it seems a venturesome believing, yet venture on Him; He cannot, He will not reject you! He will proclaim a jubilee, and set each bonds slave free.

See, then, how the great Redeemer blessed us; Jesus the Christ does all things well. He clears the understanding; He breaks the power of sinful habits; He removes the load of despondency; He does it all! Christ Jesus, Mary’s son, Jehovah’s Son: man, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, yet God over all, blessed forever! He who died on Calvary, whose precious blood is the panacea for all human ills—He it is, and He only—is the Liberator of our fallen race!

IV. WHAT IS THE DESIGN OF GOD IN ALL THIS?

This question is answered in the next verse of the text—“I am the Lord: that is My name: and My glory will I not give to another.” The great end of God in Christ was the manifestation of His own glorious attributes—a simple truth, but big with comfort. Should the sinner who has been an atrocious offender against laws, human and divine, conceive himself to be an improper subject for the grace of God, I would take him by the hand, and lest despair drive him to further sin, I would put this truth clearly before him; where is mercy most glorified? Is it not in passing by the greatest offenses? You have great offenses; there is room in *you* for mercy to be greatly displayed! Where is grace glorified? Is it not in conquering the most violent passions? You have such; divine grace may, therefore, be glorified in you! Why, great sinner, instead of not being a fit subject for grace, I will venture to say that you are, in all respects, one of the most suitable! There is elbowroom in you for grace to work; there is room in your emptiness for God’s fullness; there is a clear stage in your sinfulness for God’s amazing grace. But you say you have been a ringleader in the devil’s army? Yes and how can God strike a more telling blow against the hosts of darkness than by capturing you? But you tell me that you are an enormous sinner? How will the Lord of love encourage other sinners to come better than by calling you, for it will be rumored about among your fellow sinners—“Have you heard that So-and-So is saved?” I know they will jeer, but still, in their secret hearts, they will think it over, and they will say, “How is this?” and they will

be led to inquire into the ways of God's grace! A brother told the church, a short time ago, a little of his history, and it caused us all to rejoice in sovereign grace. He had lived in all manner of sin and iniquity; his profession had been for some years that of a public runner and in that course of life he was brought into collision with the scum of society. He was practiced, also, in the boxing art, and that we all know, is the very reverse of having an elevating tendency. But he came to the Tabernacle; and here Jesus met with him; and he rejoices, now, to teach to others the gospel which he once rejected! But what do you think he has been doing these three years?

Some of our brothers preach in the streets, and he goes with them; and after they have told of what the grace of God can do, he humbly and yet boldly rises and says, "I am a living witness to what divine grace can do; I can declare to you what God's love has done for me." If the sermon which precedes his little speech has not interested the people, they are quite certain to be struck with his personal testimony, for in some localities many of the street folk know him; and as they look at him they say, "Why, that is old So-and-So; I knew him when he was this and that, and here he is converted!" And his witness-bearing works mightily among his old friends and acquaintances. I say, then, if now I speak to any other who has been a great offender, a drunk, or what not; if my Master does but set you free, and enlist you in His army, there will be such a shout go up in the hosts of Israel as shall make heaven ring! While the Philistines shall tremble, for their Goliath shall be slain—a new champion will be raised up from his dead body to fight for the Lord of hosts! If the Lord saved men because of their *merits*, there would be no hope for great sinners, or indeed for anyone! But if He saves us for His own glory, that He may magnify His grace and His mercy among the sons of men, then none need despair! Up to the very gates of hell would I preach the gospel, and between the jaws of death would I proclaim it! God, to glorify His grace, sets free the captives! Then why should not the most hell-deserving sinner whose heart is like hardened steel, yet become a monument of Christ's power to save? I remember one who used to say that if God would but have mercy on him, He would never hear the last of it, and it may well be the resolve of all of us—that earth and heaven shall never hear the last of our praises if grace shall but save us! As one of our hymns puts it—

*"Then loudest of the crowd I'll sing,
While heaven's resounding mansions ring
With shouts of sovereign grace!"*

Yes, we will each sing loudest, each owing most, each desiring, therefore, to bend the lowest, and to praise the most heartily the grace which has set us free!

Time flies with us! Days are rushing past; years are hastening away. How long shall it be before Christ shall gain your hearts? How long shall you hear of Him, and continue to refuse His grace? How long, you unconverted ones will you hug your chains, and kiss your fetters? "Turn you, turn you from your evil ways! For why will you die O house of Israel?" "Seek you the Lord while He may be found! Call upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—ISAIAH 42.

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